

Basin 9: White River Basin

Including the following sites:

Texas Falls	Hancock Branch, Hancock
Moss Glen Falls I	Deer Hollow Brook, Granville
Web Falls	Sandusky Brook, Granville
Granville Cascade Chain	Sandusky Brook, Granville

One site was not located:

Bailey Falls	Robbins Branch, Hancock
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For the following see the appendix:

Bethel Falls	White River, Bethel
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Basin 9 is the White River watershed of central eastern Vermont. The eastern part of the basin is hilly but not mountainous and may not have very many falls or gorges. The western part of the basin contains the Northfield Mountains and the main ridge of the central Green Mountains. It has to have many cascades, mountain gorges and small falls that have not been mapped.

At present the only sites we know in this basin are those that are well known to tourists and hikers. Texas Falls and Moss Glen Falls (Moss Glen I, distinguishing it from Moss Glen II which is in Stowe) are owned by the national forest and state respectively and are important recreational sites and designated State Natural Areas.

Bailey Falls is apparently popular with hikers and descriptions of it and directions to it are available, but it is not mapped very precisely and we never found it.

Report 56, Texas Falls, Hancock Branch, Hancock, Addison County, Vermont.

Site 295, surveyed on 3 October 1983 by J.C. Jenkins.

Small gorge with small cascades, small falls and some nice pools; developed by the National Forest as a recreational site.

Atlas map 25, USGS Breadloaf 7.5' map. The area is well-signed.

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The site is in heavy hemlock-hardwoods forest in central Green Mountains, about 20 yards from a dirt road. The National Forest has built trails, bridges, handrails, and massive stone and wood fences.

The river is a steep mountain brook averaging about ten to 15 feet wide, with very clean water.

Texas Falls is really a small gorge. From the top, there is a narrow gorge about ten to 20 feet deep by five feet wide containing four falls from five to 15 feet high, and three carved stone pools about 20 feet in diameter. After about 200 feet the gorge opens up and there is a chain of small cascades about 500 feet long with sloping rock walls about five to 15 feet high and about 45 degrees to the horizontal. There are several small falls and pools in the cascade. Altogether the gorge and cascade are about 700 feet long, after which there are no more rock walls and falls and the stream becomes an ordinary mountain stream with a bouldery channel.

The rock is the Cambrian Piny Hollow formation, a standard sort of blue mountain schist. As elsewhere, it is a good rock for sculpture and potholes: the gorge has nice concave faces and overhanging walls and rippled surfaces and the other features we associate with pothole enlargement. The rock seems to be uniformly acid, with no sign of lime.

Because of the deep shade and acid rock there are comparatively few vascular plants. About 15 species were recorded within the gorge, all common in mountain woodlands throughout the state.

The sloping rocks of the lower gorge are good habitat for mosses and liverworts. About 20 species were recorded. No rarities were seen but the mosses are well developed and handsome and the species diversity is about as high as we get for an acid site. So we have rated the botany as exemplary.

The site is much visited and the trails get a lot of use. The area is generally clean and since visitors mostly stay on the trails the rocks and gorge are in good condition.



TEXAS FALLS

A pretty place: developing it for recreation has compromised the wildness but not the attractiveness, and it still has a good rock and mountain flavor. We like the scale of places like this; the amount of rock and the depth of the gorge are just right for the amount of stream. It is the right size to fit nicely under trees. Some of the falls are especially pretty if you walk up the channel and look at them from below: the trails are intended to let you look down into the gorge and see the rocks and swirls from above and that is fine, but if you really want to see any waterfall you should climb up to it from below, and this is especially true here.

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Summary: Mountain setting, nice to fine rocks, exemplary botany, wild but not secluded, no trash, developed as a recreational site and much used for sightseeing, potentially excellent swimming, but not permitted.

HIGH IMPORTANCE: As fine a small sculptured gorge as we have in the state; important tourist site, on Vermont Fragile Areas Registry.

Plants from Texas Falls

Mosses and Liverworts

Atrichum undulatum	Pogonatum alpinum
Bartramia pomiformis	Coniocephalum conicum
Hylocomnium splendens	Plagiochila asplenoides
Fissadens adianthoides	Marsupelia emarginata
Scapania nemorosa	Calypogeia sp.
Lepidozia reptans	Plagiothecium denticulatum
Isopterygium distichaceum	Herzogiella striatella
Rhacomitrium aciculare	Mnium (double-toothed)
Paraleucobryum longifolium	Thuidium sp.
Sphagnum sp.	? Pogonatum urnigerum
Ceratodon purpureus	Hypnum imponens

Vascular Plants

Hemlock-northern hardwoods forest with some ash

Acer spicatum	Dryopteris spinulosa
Oxalis montana	Aster acuminatus
Aralia nudicaulis	Thalictrum polygamum
Aster divaricatus	Prenanthes altissima
Rubus flagellaris	Carex torta
Aster macrophyllus	Aster cordifolius
Viola sp.	Thelypteris phegopteris
Oxalis europaea	

Report 57, Moss Glen Falls I, Deer Hollow Brook, Granville, Addison County, Vermont.

Site 296, surveyed on 17 October 1983 by P.F. Zika.

A large high-angle cascade (almost a large falls), pretty and popular.

Atlas map 25, Warren 7.5' quadrangle. The site is on Vermont Route 100 in the Granville Gulf Reservation and is marked by road signs.

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The site is in a forested mountain ravine, about 100 feet from the highway, with a parking lot, a boardwalk and trail, and several warning signs to keep visitors off the rocks.

The brook is a small mountain stream about ten to 15 feet wide with clean, clean, cold water.

The site contains a high-angle cascade (sections of it are actually free-falling) that drops about 30 feet over a rock face 15-25 feet wide.

The rock is mapped as schist of the Pinney Hollow formation, of Cambrian age. There are no potholes or vertically carved faces.

The vascular plants are ordinary and no species list was compiled. The only notable historical record from Moss Glen Falls is the woodland mint Blephila hirsuta, collected there around the turn of the century. We have made several attempts to relocate the species at the falls and other places in the gulf but have not succeeded. It is not a conspicuous species and may still be present in the area. Currently it is known from only a single station in the state.

Bryophytes are common on the wet ledges along the cascade. No collections were made but it is a site that might be worth future study.

The site is a well-known scenic attraction. It is marked on the official state road map. Many visitors photograph the cascade from the road. There is no swimming, and no easy path to the top of the cascade. There is a small amount of litter along the trail.

An attractive place, principally noteworthy for the size of the cascade and the woodland setting. It is an official natural area of the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation.

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Summary: Woodland setting, nice rocks, spectacular cascade, average botany but formerly one rare plant, wild but not secluded, some trash, very clean water, no swimming, very popular for sightseeing and picnicking.

HIGH IMPORTANCE: A large pretty cascade and popular recreational site. A designated State Natural Area.



MOSS GLEN FALLS I

Report 58, Web Falls, Sandusky Brook, Granville, Addison County, Vermont.

Site not numbered by the state, surveyed on 17 July 1984 by P.F. Zika.

A large undammed falls.

Atlas map 26, USGS Warren 7.5-minute quadrangle. From Roxbury take Route 12A south to the Granville town line. The pulloff for the falls is about one-quarter mile further south and is on the right (west). Follow the footpath along the north side of the stream for about 150 yards to reach the falls. An old logging road starting at the pulloff leads above the falls.

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Web Falls is in a rural basin along the Third Branch of the White River. The valley is narrow and heavily forested, with scattered homes and farms. The falls are in a steep ravine with yellow birch and hemlock woods, and are natural and undisturbed.

The stream, a mountain brook about four to ten feet wide, is clean and cold, with clear, greenish, sweet water. The rocks in the stream are mossy but have few macroscopic algae. A few stonefly larvae were seen.

The waterfall is about eight to ten feet wide and drops 25 feet over a 40 foot wide ledge. At the base is a pool seven feet deep. On one side of the stream there is a ten to 20 foot high ledge; the other bank is steep and wooded. Above the falls is a series of cascades and pools that is treated separately in report 59 (Granville Cascade Chain).

The bedrock at Web Falls is a schist from Ordovician Stowe formation, a rock found at many of our most attractive mountain waterfalls and gorges. Here the rocks are broken into big chunks with flat tops, making it easy to climb around and see the falls from different angles. One of the ledges by the pool is nicely sculpted into big pillow-shaped mounds, and is a fine place to sunbathe. In only one place was there any evidence of lime in the schist. No potholes or ripple-rock were found.

The vascular plants at Web Falls are ordinary, and are listed at the end of this report. There are abundant mosses and lichens. No detailed survey of bryophytes was attempted, but they are probably moderately diverse here.

Web Falls is a favorite local site. It has fine swimming with a good place to dive from and good rocks for sunning. There are several fire rings above the ledges, suggesting camping or partying. The nearby logging road and several faint footpaths offer good hiking along the stream. Above the falls is an



WEB FALLS

outstanding chain of pools and cascades, adding greatly to the value of the area.

This site boasts a noisy high falls, undisturbed setting, no dam, unusually attractive rocks and cryptogams, and excellent swimming. It deserves a rating of highly important. It is a very pretty waterfall. Currently there are no known threats to the site. Any logging upslope should be done very carefully to prevent excessive siltation of the brook.

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Summary: Mountain setting, exemplary rocks, average biology, clean, clean water, excellent swimming, limited diving, popular for hiking, camping, partying.

HIGH IMPORTANCE

Vascular Plants at Web Falls

Betula alleghaniensis	Solidago flexicaulis
Tsuga canadensis	Thalictrum polygamum
Acer saccharum	Galium sp.
A. spicatum	Glyceria striata
Dryopteris intermedia	Oxalis europaea
Thelypteris phegopteris	Carex gracillima
Aster acuminatus	Mitella diphylla
A. cordifolius	Cystopteris bulbifera
Viola sp.	Prenanthes altissima
Laportea canadensis	Rubus odoratus
Athyrium filix-femina	Circaea alpina
Solidago rugosa	Arisaema triphyllum
S. canadensis	Brachyletrum erectum

Report 59, Granville Cascade Chain, Sandusky Brook, Granville, Addison County, Vermont.

Site not numbered by the state, surveyed on 17 July 1984 by P.F. Zika.

A series of low cascades and narrow pools.

Atlas map 26, USGS Warren 7.5-minute quadrangle. From the center of Roxbury take Route 12A south to the Granville town line. About one-quarter mile further south there is a pulloff on the right (west). Park there and follow the stream up beyond Web Falls (Report 58). For the next quarter-mile there is a continuous chain of pools and cascades.

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The site is in the narrow valley of the Third Branch of the White River, a rural and mostly wooded region. Logging is the most important land use. Along the cascade chain there are yellow birch and hemlock woods. There are no buildings, pipes, dams, wires, bridges, or recent roads near the cascades.

The brook is a mountain stream about six to ten feet wide, clear in the shallow places and green in the deeper pools. Aquatic insects are common.

The pools and drops begin at the falls and continue for about one-quarter mile upstream, between the slopes of a steep-sided ravine. The largest cascade tumbles about 15 feet; this is also about the maximum height of the rock walls. The stream goes through several small flumes in places where the schist is vertically bedded and the water has eroded out the softer exposed layers, leaving low pinacles and chutes.

The geological map indicates the bedrock is schist from the Ordovician Stowe formation. It is worn into a number of trench-shaped pools. Potholes and sculpted rock are generally absent. Only a small amount of ripple-rock is found, where the bedding is nearly vertical. The rock is not calcareous.

The forest along the cascades creates a deep shade, and the vascular plant diversity is low. But in the stream channel and on damp outcrops there are many mosses. These were not sampled. A list of vascular plants is at the end of the report.

The cascades receive light use. The trails are faint and would be much more eroded if they were regularly walked. It is likely that a number of people who visit the splendid falls downstream do not realize there is an attraction further upslope.

This site ranks highly important because of its undeveloped and remote nature, and its loveliness. The noisy cascades and

narrow pools, deep shade, and mossy banks are a delight. The only possible current threat is logging near the streambank.

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Summary: Mountain setting, nice rocks, average biology, secluded, clean, very clean water, some bathing, nice hiking and picnicking, should not be publicized.

HIGH IMPORTANCE

Vascular Plants Seen at Granville Cascade Chain

Tsuga canadensis
Betula alleghaniensis
Fraxinus americana
Fagus grandifolia
Acer pensylvanicum
Viburnum alnifolium
Gymnocarpium dryopteris
Polystichum acrosticoides
Clintonia borealis
Medeola virginica
Streptopus roseus
Trillium undulatum
Pyrola virens